



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE
February 1, 2011

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 93% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony to you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

S.B. 96 "An Act Concerning Termination Without Cause for Certain Officers in Municipal Police Departments"

Identical to a defeated state mandate proposal from last session (S.B. 170), this year's version would also mandate that local assistant chiefs of police be granted special protection under a "just cause" provision. As noted by the non-partisan Office of Fiscal Analysis from an amended version last session (File No. 29, as amended by Senate "A") – this proposal would create "potential cost[s]" for already struggling local budgets.

CCM **opposes S.B. 96** as new unfunded state mandate on municipalities. It is only a matter of time before other municipal employees demand essentially a lifetime appointment to be removed from "political situations" (indeed there have been attempts to apply "just cause" provisions to other department heads). This is a "camel's nose under the tent" proposal if there ever was one.

Although CCM is sympathetic to some of the obstacles local police departments may face when recruiting potential successors for chiefs of police -- the rationale for "just cause" standards for chiefs, which is that department investigations need to be free of political pressure, does not exist for assistants. Local departmental administrative accountability lies with the Chiefs of Police.

Municipal leaders are accountable to the residents of their community. They need managerial discretion and flexibility to meet the needs of their constituents. All that a "just cause" mandate would do, as proposed in S.B. 96, is drive up the costs for municipalities that seek to replace such employees, as it is a matter that would have to be argued before a court.

Lawmakers need to focus on means to reduce state mandates -- and not push new, potentially costly ones on hometowns. **CCM urges the committee to oppose S.B. 96.**

If you have any questions, please contact Bob Labanara of CCM at rlabanara@ccm-ct.org.